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A BIT OF SCANDAL

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

For Female Characters

By FANNIE BARNETT LINSKY



Price 35 Cents

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Eldridge Entertainment House

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY APPEAR

GRACE HART		
JEAN LEWIS	} room-mates	} Students at
NAN BARRETT		
FRANCINA DEVOTO		
MARY SHERMAN		
		Briar View College for Women.

MISS OGILVIE—Dean of the College. Commonly known as
“The Ogre.”

MRS. DEVOTO—Francina’s mother.

CORA, the Maid—(If desired, may be played by person who plays
part of “The Ogre.”)

MRS. SHERMAN-WHEELER—Mary’s mother. (If desired, may
be played by person who plays Mrs. DeVoto.)

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.

Scene 1. Library and social room of Briar View College.
Early December.

Scene 2. Same. (Curtain lowered for moment to denote
passing of time.)

ACT II.

The garden of Grace's home. The following summer.

REMARKS.

COSTUMES.

The costumes may be the ordinary dress of today. In the first act the girls wear dresses such as any college students would wear in the winter season.

In Act II the regulation dress for summer.

"The Ogre"—prim and old-maidish—a typical "school-ma'am," should dress to accentuate her character.

Mrs. DeVoto and Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler should dress in modern up-to-date garments.

Cora, the maid—conventional costume for maid—i. e., black, neat fitting dress, white collar and cuffs, white apron.

CHARACTERS.

"The Ogre" to talk with an accent very punctilious and correct.

Mrs. DeVoto to have very slight Italian accent.

Mary and Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler to have noticeable "Southern Drawl" in their speech.

A Bit of Scandal

ACT I

SCENE I.

Library and social room of the college. Table at R. Fireplace with mantel shelf above, L. front. Small vase on shelf. Window in back wall. Book case against wall near window. Duplicate of vase on mantel standing on book case. Large encyclopedia on stand near book case. Violin in case, and wire music stand in R. corner. Several chairs. Books scattered about on table. Victrola conveniently placed. Small statue on pedestal, standing on Victrola. Window seat or utility box covered with cushions placed at convenience. Door at L. near front. Another at back wall R. presumably leading to college grounds and outdoors. Screen conveniently placed.

Three girls seated about table in attitudes of study and despair. Occasionally writing busily.

Grace—(Stretching out arms with a sigh of relief) Well, thank Goodness I've only got one more paragraph to do on this thing. Oh! I certainly do love to write ten-page compositions.

*Jean—*Well, you can't possibly love it any more than I do. Say, how do you spell "Thermopylae?"

*Grace—*Foolish question number 997. Why ask me when Nan's here. She's the star performer in History, 15. Come on, Nan, are you struck dumb at the compliment? *(Shies a book at her.)* Wake up, will you, and spell Thermopylae for Jean.

*Nan—*Shut up, will you, or rather both of you? I'm almost finished with this, and I'm mightily thankful. *(Yawns.)* Do you know, it's just been the hardest kind of work for me to keep my mind on this stuff today. I'm simply dying to hear what Francina will have to say about tonight. She promised to come in here on her way back from her lesson to tell us the news, O,

hang it, why did you get me started anyhow. (*Turns back to work.*) I've just got to finish this pesky thing. (*Scribbles madly.*)

Jean—Well, if no one will spell "Thermopylae" for me, I suppose I'll have to find out for myself. (*Goes to encyc.—hums softly as she hunts.*) Good land! all the T-H's I can find, seem to be thermometers of some kind. What time do you expect Fran back, Nan?

Nan—(*Rousing with a start*) Um, H'm, yes I guess so (*vaguely*).

Jean—You guess so? O Lord, no wonder you're the star of the history class, If you can put your mind on a stupid old thesis, when there's such a thing as college theatricals only a few hours off—and WE ARE IN 'EM.

Nan—(*Sighing*) Well, I suppose it's no use trying to finish my work with this crowd around. (*Brightening.*) But honestly, girls, I'm as excited as I can be, and I'm so N-e-r-v-o-u-s. I just know that I'll forget my cue and pirouette when I ought to be making a bow, or else I'll be bowing to you, Jean, when you have your back turned squarely to me.

Jean—Well, come on, let's try it a few times before Fran. comes in. Grace you may be the orchestra. All ready, now.

(*They go through the steps of an old-fashioned minuet, Grace hums. At end, Nan makes a very deep curtsey, and rolls over on floor. All laugh.*)

Nan—(*Getting up and shaking herself*) You hard-hearted wretches to laugh at me. I just know something awful will happen to me tonight when I'll have a hoop-skirt to manage besides. Well, the only consolation is, that if I should roll over, at least I shall be able to make a generous display of my own great-grandmother's best Sunday-go-to-meeting pantalettes—and ruffled ones at that.

Grace—Why, Nan Barrett, I'm shocked at you.

Nan—Well, I can't help it if you are. Say, do you know I think Francina's going to make a hit with her solo—she plays so beautifully. Don't you think so?

Grace—Yes, she surely does, but (*thoughtfully*) I do just kind of wish that Mary Sherman wasn't down for a violin solo

too. You know, I can't seem to take to that girl, somehow or other. I don't know why, either. I hardly know her—but she's so—so—er—well. I don't know just what she is—but I don't like her.

Nan—Well, I sort of used to feel that way myself, when she first came here, but lately I've had a feeling that the girl's unhappy, and that's why she acts so queer.

Jean—(*Surprised*) Why Nan, I didn't know that you had made friends with her.

Nan—I haven't. But sometimes I feel as though I ought to, especially since she has a room on the same floor with us? But she's rather distant, I must admit, and—O, here's Fran at last. Now we'll hear what's been done about the program. You know, really. I can't help hoping—

(*Enter Fran, violin case and music roll in one hand, Bunch of flowers pinned on coat.*)

Francina—Hello there, everybody. (*Sinks into chair.*) My dears, I'm so tired, I'm simply a corpse.

Grace—Well, I must say you're very fittingly decorated. (*Points to flowers.*) But we've been waiting here hours, haven't we girls, to hear about the arrangements for the big show. Did you get the program?

Francina—O, my dears, I'm dead. Don't ask me to say a word, please. If you only knew—

Jean—Now, there, there, you poor dear, of course, you're so all in we wouldn't think of ALLOWING you to even speak. No indeed, you must just sit right there and rest. (*Starts to take off Francina's hat for her, Grace removes guitars for her, Nan her coat, etc.*)

Chorus—Of course you're tired—now don't think of saying a word!

Francina—(*Jumping up and laughing*) O, go on, you old frauds, don't I know I'd never get out of here alive If I didn't tell you all about it. Well (*taking a long sheet of paper from pocket*), I've got it—here it is.

Chorus—O, do let me see it.

Francina—Gently, gently, my children. There is more to this than greets the eye. First, I've got a confession to make.

You know "open confession is good for the soul." Well, then, here goes. You see—er—I'm—well—I'm going to play—

Nan—Well, that's nothing new. Grace, do give her a poke, please, so she'll get to the important part. I'm slowly dying of suspense.

Grace—(*Picks up pointer*) Madam, our high chief ruler hath commanded me to poke you. Beware, lest I poke too hard.

Francina—(*Laughing*) O, do stop your foolishness, girls. Well—here goes. I'm to play for my first number—a—piece—
THAT I COMPOSED MYSELF.

Jean—Why, Francina DeVoto, how perfectly fine—but—you wretch—you never told us! I'm just delighted.

Grace—Wonderful!

Nan—Well, for goodness sake, don't stop there. Do tell us all about it.

Francina—Why, I've been practicing with Sig. Forni for over a month, and, of course, he's helped me a whole lot. When I first wrote the thing I was almost ashamed to even show it to him, but—well—I finally did, and he thought it was fine, and he spoke to "The Ogre" about it, and she was willing, and—and—well, that's all there is to it, except (*unfastening music roll*) that here it is and I'm not to touch my fiddle again until I play it tonight. I've practiced three hours today. (*Sinks into chair*) O, I'm so tired.

Jean—Well, I just think that's wonderful. Who'd ever have thought that we were entertaining a genius in our midst. That's what comes of having Italian blood in your veins. I always knew that Italians were artistic. I don't see what particular good it ever did me to have my great grandmother's great grandmother come over in the Mayflower.

Grace—But Fran, tell us about Mary Sherman. I do hope that you play before she does—I should hate to have her come first.

Francina—(*With a frown*) Well, she DOES come before me. She's the second on the program and I'm the fifth, and to tell the truth, girls, that's the only thing about this that I don't like one bit—but what could I do. You know the Ogre. No use to start anything in the shape of an argument with her.

Nan—No indeed. All the thermometers that Jean found in

Brittanica would immediately forget that they had any mercury it would go down so low once she fixed you with her icy stare.

Grace—O well, Fran, you don't have to be afraid of Mary Sherman. I've heard you play before now, and I'll bet on you every time. Let's forget about 'Contrary Mary' anyhow, and talk about something pleasant, I see she's left her fiddle and stand here all ready.

Francina—Yes, you're right, Grace, I'd much rather not talk about her any more nor about the concert either. As a matter of fact, I'm starved. Have you girls had your lunch yet?

Jean—No, we waited for you. We wanted to hear the news. And say, girls, I've got a bright idea.

Grace—Never!

Nan—Impossible! (*Together.*)

Jean—(*With a withering look*) Suppose, instead of going over to the Hall Dining Room, we stay here and have a rarebit for lunch. We've got nearly everything here and it'll be a sort of celebration before the great event.

Grace—Gee, that'll be fine.

Nan—Scrumptious, but we'll have to hustle. You know The Ogre made us all promise to rest at least two hours this afternoon so as to be nice and fresh for the evening.

Jean—O, we'll be 'fresh', never fear. I feel frisky enough to do a Rag Time Jazz right here and now. (*Seizes Nan and whirls her round, others all clap.*)

Francina—Well, I'm tired enough to sleep for a week, the way I feel now, and hungry enough to eat—YOU (*makes face at Grace.*)

Grace—Well, if it's all decided, let's get a move on. I'll run over to my room and get the chafing dish, and one of you'll have to go over to the Coop (Co-op) and get some 'Good-natured' alcohol.

Jean—I'll go.

Nan—O, if all you girls have to go out, I'll go up and get that box of goodies that mother just sent me. I'll contribute it to the feast in Honor of "Our Genius." Think of YOU (*turning to Francina*) composing a piece all your own!

(*While she is speaking, door at L. front opens cautiously. Girls do not notice. Head of girl is seen. Intruder carefully closes door all but a crack and stands listening.*)

Francina—Well, it's hardly a compliment to me to have you all so surprised to think that I COULD do it. I wrote all about it to my mother last week, and she—

Nan—My, won't she be proud of you Fran.

Francina—She will, certainment! But come, I perish of hunger! I must go up stairs with my hat and coat. Will you girls be long?

Grace—O no, I'll fly. We ought to be back in three shakes of a lamb's tail.

Francina—Whatever that may mean. But what shall I do with my precious music? I should die if anything ever happened to it. (*Looks about for place to put it.*) Not that I need it. I know the whole thing by heart and I could play it with my eyes shut.

Jean—Why don't you put it in the drawer of the table. Then we can lock it and hide the key. Nobody else will be using this room before we come back. If you keep it in your room you'd surely dream about it, and we must all be sure and get in our beauty sleep this afternoon. (*Opens drawer.*) Don't you think this is a good place, girls.

Nan—Why yes, I think so, Nobody'd touch it anyway. Come on girls, I can almost taste that rarebit. You girls hurry now.

(*Meanwhile, door at L. has closed. Listener disappears. Exit Grace and Nan through door at back, Jean lingers to wait for Francina, who takes music, places it in drawer, locks drawer, and places key in little case on top of book case. Exit Jean and Francina.*)

Silence for few seconds. Door at L. again cautiously opens. Girl is seen. Hesitates, then tip-toes softly into room. Glances around anxiously. Walks about room as if searching. Stops frequently to listen. Tries drawer of table. Shakes head. Looks under rug. Shakes out everything on table. Hears slight noise. Starts nervously and listens. All is silence. Goes quickly to book case and appears to be intently looking for a book. A voice is heard coming nearer, singing a popular air. Enter Grace carrying chafing dish. Does not see girl at book case.

Grace—(*Setting dish on table*) Tum-tum, dee dee, tum tum di dum (*turns and sees other*) Good gracious, how you startled

me. I did not know there was a soul here. Can I help you Miss Sherman?

Mary—(Quietly) No, thank you, I was just looking for a certain book that I saw here last night. I have it now. *(Takes book from case and goes quickly out of room.)*

Grace—(To Nan just coming in) Gee, I don't like that girl. She's got such soft sneaky ways.

Nan—(Surprised) That girl? What girl? I didn't see anybody.

Grace—O, that Sherman person. She was in here when I came up, looking for a book, and when I spoke to her she just cut me off in that cool little way of hers and took herself and her book off double quick.

Nan—Well, I suppose she surmised we were having a jam-boree, seeing you with the chafing dish. You could hardly blame her for not staying. I suppose it would not hurt us to ask her in.

Grace—O, nothing doing. She'd spoil the party. Shh, here comes the girls. *(Enter the others.)*

Francina—Well, here we are back again. What's doing?

Nan—Grace, you get the eggs and beat them, there's a good child.

Grace—Sure, where are they?

Nan—Why, in the refrigerator, of course, where else should they be?

Grace—The refrigerator, O, of course (Goes to window, opens it, takes in large box, from which she carefully extracts two eggs). You see, at the present price of eggs, I didn't think you allowed yours out alone at night. But I've sad news for you. These are the last. I guess it's the collection box for us to gather up the price of another dozen—and I'm as poor as a church-mouse this week. *(Takes bust off pedestal, turns latter upside down, wipes it out with towel extracted from under cushion of one of chairs, upon which Francina has seated herself.)* Sorry to disturb you honey, but you see *(airily),* this light house-keeping's such a bore, especially when one is entertaining. *(Places pedestal and towel on table, goes to Victrola, and from lower part extracts small frying pan, two saucepans, a few dishes, knives and forks, etc. Puts all on floor, hunts anxiously for*

something else.) For goodness sake, Nan, the egg-beater's missing. (*The others look up.*)

Jean—Well, you didn't look in the right place. That egg-beater makes sweeter music than ever came out of a Victrola. We keep it in the safe, my dear.

Grace—O yes, of course, I forgot. (*Goes to utility box or window seat, unloads all pillows. Pulls out egg-beater.*) Eureka, I have found it. (*Wares beater—Sets to work vigorously beating eggs in bowl made of inverted pedestal. Others meanwhile bring salt, pepper, cream, crackers, etc.*)

Nan—(*Stirring*) Well, I think we are ready for the eggs.

(*Grace attempts to hold bowl aloft and pass it to Nan with a flourish. Nearly stumbles.*)

Grace—Mercy.

Jean—Good Heavens, Grace, do be careful. Think what a calamity if you had dropped them.

Nan—Shh, just take a look at Francina. She's fallen asleep. The poor kid. She's worn out from all this excitement. We ought to pack her off for a nap double quick, or she'll be 'all in' for tonight.

Jean—Just imagine anyone sleeping when there's a rarebit around. She'd never forgive us if we didn't wake her up to have some. Shh, I hear someone coming. If it's the Ogre, we'll all get a call down for not going out for a regular lunch.

(*A knock. Nan opens. Enter Marry Sherman.*)

Nan—Why good evening—er I mean good afternoon—er—won't you come in?

Marry—(*Stepping inside the door*) Thank you. I—er—didn't mean to intrude.

Jean—O, that's all right. It's no intrusion at all. You see we were just having a little celebration in honor of tonight. (*Marry starts.*)

Nan—Won't you stay and join us—the rarebit's all ready. (*Grace brings plates and Nan serves.*)

Marry—O no, I really mustn't. You see I was just coming round the corner when I met Miss Ogilvie and she gave me this to give to Miss DeVoto. It must have come this morning while she was away. Isn't she here? (*Look around and see Francina asleep—holds up letter.*)

Nan—(Takes letter and hands Mary a plate) Well, I guess we'll have to wake her up then. Now do have some rarebit, Miss Sherman, before it gets cold. You know it's no good unless you eat it piping hot. You see you are such a near neighbor of ours that we really ought to be more sociable, oughtn't we, girls?

*Chorus—*Why, of course.

Mary—(Agitated) I'm sure that's very nice of you.

Nan—(Glancing at letter) From Bryantville. It must be from her folks. *(Goes over and gently rouses Francina.)* Get up child, get up and see what I have for you.

Francina—(Rousing with difficulty) Why I haven't been asleep, have I? Why I know I haven't. The idea, I'll bet you folks ate up all the party before you called me. I almost wish you hadn't waked me at all—because—do you know—I was having the most wonderful dream—about tonight. *(Catches sight of letter.)* For me? O, give it to me quick *(looks at post-mark)*, O, it's from home, O dear I'm so excited *(stops suddenly)* I wonder if anything could be the matter. You know, girls the last time my mother wrote she said—O, dear, I just know it's bad news—I think—

Jean—(Sarcastically) Well, suppose you open it Fran. You know you COULD read it and not have us all slowing dying of suspense. What do you girls say?

*Chorus—*Why, course—read it—Silly—Sure, read it, etc.

Francina—(Opens letter) O, guess, the loveliest news—O, my dears, my dears *(dances for joy)*, My mother. my darling mother, do you hear—is coming here for the show. *(Reads from letter.)* "We have all been so proud to hear that you have written a piece all yourself, mis cara *(aside)* you know that's Italian for 'My darling,' and that I am all anxiety to hear you play it—and so I am coming." O, O, isn't it too wonderful. *(Seizes the girl nearest her and waltzes her around.)*

(Mary Sherman, in background, is almost unnoticed in general excitement, but at mention of Fran's mother Mary covers her face with hands, and acts very agitated. No one sees. Nan gives Fran plate, and all continue to eat.)

*Nan—*Gosh, girls, the rarebit's all cold, but don't blame me. This is what comes of having a genius in our midst.

*Francina—*Now girls, don't be so silly and call me that.

You know it's not so. I just happened to write this piece, and I'll probably never get up enough cour——(*Turns, and for the first times catches sight of Mary*) O good afternoon, Miss Sherman, I hope you'll pardon me but in the excitement of all this I never even noticed that we had a visitor. I guess I quite forgot my manners altogether, but you see I was so overjoyed at the thought of seeing my darling mother that I'm sure you'll forgive me.

Mary—Why certainly, don't mention it all all—indeed I don't blame you in the least.

Jean—Are any of your folks coming for the grand affair, Miss Sherman.

Mary—(*Quickly*) O, no, you see there is only my mother, and she wouldn't come.

Francina—WOULDN'T. You mean COULDN'T, don't you?

Mary—(*Sadly*) No, I mean WOULDN'T (*embarrassed silence.*)

Grace—(*Breaking in with apparent effort*) Well, I think it's about time the orchestra was playing "Home, Sweet Home" for all of us. Fran, You're dead tired, and it's time you got to bed, for we've all got a big night ahead of us. and we'll catch it if the Ogre comes in here and finds us celebrating. Anyway, it's Jean and Nan's turn to do the dishes, I'm very thankful to say, so you and I can "Eat it and Beat it."

Nan—Heavens, Grace, what slang! Think what Professor "English-as-she-is-spoke" would say if she could hear you!

Grace—Well, I should worry, Heavens, there's some more. Well, I can't help it if she is shocked. The dear old frump. She hasn't got a thing on her mind, but English-as-she-should-be-spoke, while as for me (*airily*), a popular young person like me, why, I've got so much to think about, that I really cawn't be bothered (*mocking*) abaout figuring aout the correct English expression for every trivial little trifle. Naouw, young ladies—

Jean—(*Others all laughing*) Why you old fraud, you haven't got a thing on your brain but your hair, unless—

Grace—(*Still affectedly*) Well, thank fortune, I've got plenty of that (*touching her 'Crowning Glory'*) and I don't have to pretend that I like it 'bobbed' (*with a face at one of the others who if possible should have short hair*) simply because it's fashionable—when we all know—oh, but there, what's the

use of my spending my efforts on such a low-brow, unappreciative audience. Come darling (*to Francina*) we will leave this plebian atmosphere. (*Takes Francina around waist.*)

(*Nan throws sofa cushion after retreating figures. Exit Grace, Francina and Mary.*)

Jean—Gosh, Grace is certainly a scream when she gets going, isn't she?

Nan—Yes she certainly is, but she isn't in it with her brother. You ought to hear him do imitations. He's simply great. I tell him he missed his vocation—he ought to be on the professional stage.

Jean—Well, I'm glad he isn't.

Nan—You are! Why what difference does it make to you?

Jean—O, well, you see my folks would never stand for anything—

Nan—Why, Jean Lewis, you old clam—and you've been keeping this to yourself all this time. Why, the idea—I never even guessed—

Jean—(*Surprised*) Why, I didn't SAY anything, did I? Why I never intended to tell you—I mean—I mean—O, hang it—I mean—that I don't mean anything at all, but if you dare to tell one of those girls out there—I'll—I'll—O, I'll put some poison in the next rarebit you eat, Nan Barrett. But honestly (*getting confidential*) I DO think he's a peach, Nan, don't you?

Nan—Well, I guess he'll be a 'Pair' pretty soon, if you've got it as bad as this. But now, my darling to get back to earth once more, what are we going to do about the dishes. If we have to wash them and we keep on talking, we'll never even get forty winks in before tonight.

Jean—O, let's leave the dishes till tomorrow, will you. Nan? I'm dead tired. Nobody'll want this room any more today, and we can put them out of sight and come in before lunch tomorrow and do them. What do you say?

Nan—All right, I'm perfectly willing. (*They remove dishes behind screen.*) I guess I'm as tired as you are. It's lucky we don't have a show more often or there'd be precious little work done at Briar View. Say (*pausing as thought strikes her—and beginning to take down hair, or remove tie, etc.*), wasn't it queer

the way Mary Sherman spoke about her mother? Did you notice it?

Jean—Did I notice it? Well, I'd have to be blind in one eye and not able to see out of the other if I didn't notice it. It surely did sound mighty strange to hear a girl say that her own mother WOULDN'T come to her her play. I think she must have had some trouble at home or she'd never talk like that!

Nan—Well, I can't imagine any girl having a fuss like that with her own mother. She must be mighty unhappy.

Jean—Maybe she is, but—(*rises and drags one shoe by laces across floor, other shoe on but unfastened*) I'm too dead tired to bother my head any more today about Mary Sherman and her affairs. I'm going to take a chance that there's no one around and run across the hall like this. Come on, Nan, or you'll have me a corpse on your hands in another five minutes.

Nan—(*Having finished taking down hair—with mouth full of hairpins*) Yes, I'm coming. (*Walks to exit, shaking out hair. Exit Nan and Jean.*)

(*Stage gradually grows darker to show waning December afternoon. Empty stage. Silence for few seconds. Door at L. softly opens. Head of same girl seen again. Hestitates, tip-toes softly into room. Glances around anxiously. Goes through same performance as before, shaking rug, moving everything on table, trying table drawer, etc. Hears noise. Starts nervously. Waits. All silent. Goes to door. Locks it. Pulls curtain lower. Tries key from door in effort to open drawer of table. No success. Goes to book case. Feels along top. Accidentally knocks down case. It breaks. At noise, retreats panic stricken to corner. Silence. Comes forward. Attempts to pick up pieces. Finds key. Overjoyed. Rushes to table opens drawer, takes out music. Goes nearer to light, glances over it. Listens at both doors, drags music stand nearer to light. Arranges music on it, gets violin, and standing, herself in shadow begins to play.*)

NOTE: On account of dim lighting, if necessary, this music may be played by some member of orchestra, behind scene, Mary Sherman simulating movement as if playing.

Slow Curtain.

SCENE II.—Same as Scene I.

(Curtain rises on Nan sitting in chair in attitude of deepest dejection. Enter Grace—all excitement.)

Grace—Good land, Nan, what's the matter? Still worrying over last night? Heavens, this whole college seems to have gone into mourning over that affair.

Nan—Well, it certain was an awful thing. *(Shivers.)* Goodness, I shiver every time I think of it.

Grace—I don't wonder. I hear Fran's completely gone to pieces. They've put her to bed, and I just heard The Ogre telephoning for the doctor.

Nan—Poor child, I should think she'd need a doctor after such a shock. But wasn't she brave, just the same, to go through the thing the way she did! Why, you know when Mary Sherman started to play her first number, I just looked over at Fran to see how she was taking it, and her face got so white I thought she was going to faint, so I leaned over and took her hand—to sort of encourage her as I thought, and when she whispered in my ear—"That's MY PIECE—she's stolen it"—why, I got such a shock I thought I'd fall off my chair. At first I thought that perhaps Fran was joking, but when I found that the poor child was really in earnest, I tried to collect my wits, and I leaned over and whispered back "What are you going to do?" And all she said was "Wait and see."

Grace—Didn't she have wonderful presence of mind, though. Of course, when I heard her play "Mendelssohn's Spring song" for her first number when it was down on the program as her encore, I knew something was wrong, but, of course, I never guessed the truth, and then when they all clapped so hard and she stood up there so brave and straight and played "The Star Spangled Banner," and everybody rose—why—I felt so proud of her I just could have hugged her. I seemed to have such funny little thrills going up and down my spine!

Nan—Yes, I know. I felt the same way myself. The air just seemed charged with electricity. But do you know, I think there's something awfully queer about this business just the same. Nobody's seen anything of Mary Sherman since this thing happened. She seems to have vanished.

Grace—I should think she'd want to vanish. I heard a crowd of girls discussing it as I came across the campus this noon, and they all predicted that The Ogre will expel her.

Nan—Really. I didn't think it would be quite as bad as that. But do you know that in spite of it all, and goodness knows I'm as fond as I can be of Francina, just the same I can't help but feel a little bit sorry for Mary Sherman, although of course, I wouldn't have had this thing happen for the world.

Grace—Well, I must say Nan, that I've never been quite able to understand your attitude towards Mary Sherman. I'm afraid you won't find many of the girls agreeing with you, most of them seem to think that she's a disgrace to the school, and that the sooner she leaves it the better. I know they intend to "cut" her dead when they meet her. So you'll be the only one who has any sympathy for her. But there! I vow I'll not listen to nor speak another word about this whole miserable business. There isn't a corner of this whole building that you can get into today but what someone routs you out with a tragic whisper, "Have you heard the latest rumor about Mary Sherman?" Shh! Someone's coming.

(Enter the Ogre and Mrs. DeVoto, latter talking excitedly, and with slight trace of foreign accent.)

Mrs. DeVoto—But I tell you my dear Miss Ogelman, there is no other way.

The Ogre—My name is Ogilvie.

Mrs. DeVoto—Ah yes, pardon (*catches sight of girls*) Ah you young ladies—do go up and comfort my little girl—she is so—so miserable.

Grace—Why, of course, we will. I didn't know that she would want to see any of us. (*Exit Grace and Nan, Back R.*)

Mrs. DeVoto—(*Wringing her hands*) O, such a miserable business. Is it not a pity that such a thing must happen. My poor little Francina. And such a beautiful piece she composed. Of course, my dear Miss Ogelman

The Ogre—My name is Ogilvie.

Mrs. DeVoto—Ah, pardon, yes, of course, Ogilvie. I was about to say my dear Miss O-gil-vie no doubt you find it hard to understand my—er—what you call—er—anguish. But you

see, you have never been a mother—you can not know a mother's joy—her pride.

The Ogre—Of course, as you say, my dear Mrs. DeVoto, as you say—ahem—I may not have the —er—feelings—ahem—that you speak of, but at least I have the honor of the college very closely at heart, and I deeply deplore this dreadful occurrence.

Mrs. DeVoto—It is shocking, shocking! Why, the girl is a thief—a thief. She stole—she deliberately took my poor Francina's music. She must be expelled—of course—there is no other way.

The Ogre—Well, I had hoped that it might not be necessary to go so far, but, of course, if you insist—

Mrs. DeVoto—Insist—of course I insist—it is the only way. The creature must be punished. My poor little Francina—she must be—must be—what you call it—recompensed—for such humiliation. The idea!

The Ogre—Well, I have sent for Mary Sherman, and she will be here directly. May I ask that you leave us alone for a little while to talk over this unfortunate matter.

Mrs. DeVoto—Of course, of course, I would not meet the creature for the world. I go to my poor Francina.

(Starts to go. Enter Mary Sherman. They meet at door. Mrs. DeVoto turns away in disdain. Mary shrinks back. Exit Mrs. DeVoto.)

Mary—You wished to see me.

The Ogre—*(Icily)* I certainly did, Miss Sherman, although it is the most painful duty that I have to perform. Never has the honor of Briar View been so sullied. And never has an act so flagrant been committed within its sacred walls. I am amazed and pained—*(pauses for breath)* ahem, inexpressibly pained, at this—ahem—dreadful occurrence. I am told that you are a Southerner, too. *(Mary winces.)* That makes your act all the more surprising, for Southerners have always been associated in my mind with people who have been the souls of honor. Have you anything to say, Miss Sherman, about your most—ahem—extraordinary conduct?

Mary—*(Slowly)* Why no, I don't know that there is anything more that CAN be said. I did it—I took Miss DeVoto's

piece and played it—I knew just what I was doing—and—well—that’s all there is to it.

The Ogre—That’s ALL. Well, I should think that was quite enough. At least you are going to say that you are sorry, I hope.

Mary—(*As if weighing her words*) W-h-y, I think I regret all the trouble I have caused you and the College, Miss Ogilvie, but—that—is—all.

The Ogre—That is All. Well, I must confess, Miss Sherman, that I certainly do not understand your attitude. It seems to me—in fact, in quite expected to find you bowed down with shame and humiliation at the dreadful thing you have done, and here you stand and calmly tell me that your only regret is at the thought of the trouble you have caused me. Really this seems very strange. (*Looks at Mary expectantly—Mary remains silent.*) Well, then, it becomes my very painful duty, to say, ahem, that you are expelled from Briar View College IN DISGRACE. I trust that at last you realize—

Mary—(*Showing signs of JOY*) EXPELLED! Really! O, thank goodness.

The Ogre—(*Shocked*) Miss Sherman! Do my ears deceive me? Really (*angrily*) I am at a loss to understand—I cannot comprehend such actions. Why—you appear actually—actually—GLAD that you are expelled. Really this is most extraordinary. I have been associated with this college for thir—ahem—a great many years, and I must confess that I have never in all that time been called upon to reprimand a student for being overjoyed at the news of her expulsion from the college. (*Moves towards door.*) Of course, I shall notify your mother at once. (*Mary winces.*) Ah, I am glad to see that your feelings are touched at last. Well, Miss Sherman (*angrily*), if you come to your senses later on, and find that you have something to say to me after all, I shall be in my office. (*Exit Miss Ogilvie.*)

(*Mary sinks into chair and covers face with hands. Enter Nan hurriedly. Mary starts up. Nan half retreats.*)

Nan—(*Coldly*) Pardon me, I did not know that this room was being used.

Mary—(*Jumping up*) O, Miss Barrett, please, just a minute (*wipes eyes*) I know you must—you must—just hate me—all the girls must—but—

Nan—Well, you could hardly expect them to—er—exactly praise you, after what has happened. You see, it happens that we are all extremely fond of Francina.

Mary—Yes, yes, I know, and really I liked her myself—very much indeed.

Nan—You did. Well, I must say that you took a mighty queer way of showing it.

Mary—O, I know that it must seem very dreadful to you all, this thing that I have done—but if you only knew the reason—if you only—Miss Barrett, I wonder if you'd let me tell you about it. I feel as if I should go mad if I didn't tell someone. (*Cries.*) If you could only know what I went through before I could make up my mind to do it at all—I feel as though, perhaps, you wouldn't judge me quite so harshly.

Nan—Well, of course, if it will relieve your feelings so much I am perfectly willing to listen. (*They sit.*)

Mary—You know, of course, that I am a Southerner (*Nan nods*). Well, my home is a large old Colonial place that has been in my father's family for generations. My father is dead, and since his death my mother and I have lived there, And O, we were so happy—we were all in all to each other. I adored my mother, Miss Barrett. I worshipped her.

Nan—Why do you speak in the past tense? Your mother is still living, isn't she.

Mary—Yes, she is, but it's not the same. You see, she married again, and he—that is—my step-father is the cause of all the trouble. I could not bear him, and he certainly returned the feeling most heartily. You see, I knew that he did not care for my mother as I did—I knew that he had only married her for the money and land and property that my father had left her, but mother was infatuated with him and could not see it. O, how that man hated me. He knew that I could see through his motives. But, of course, it meant that my mother was completely changed towards me. I have lost her—just as much as though she had died. (*Breaks down and cries.*)

Nan—Why you poor child, no wonder you were unhappy.

Mary—(*Wiping eyes*) Well, I stood it all until one day, that—that—beast concocted a scheme so dreadful that I could hardly believe my ears. You see, ever since I have been a little girl in pinafores, I have—er—well—I have had (*blushes*)—er a

sweetheart—a young boy who lived on the next estate to ours—Robert Manners.

Nan—Not Bob Manners. Why, my brother knows him. You mean the one whose father lost all his money, and then—well—committed suicide, and then the son gave up the old home and everything he had in the world to pay the debts and clear his father's name? Is that the one you mean.

Mary—(*Sadly*) Yes, that's the one, and I have been engaged to him for several years. But now that he has his own way to make in the world it means that we shall probably have to wait for a long time. But I did not mind that for I sure was mighty proud of the thing that he did. But my step-father thought differently. You see, a friend of his named Cabot, bought the Manners estate—a man who belongs to one of our oldest Southern families—and my step-father has made up his mind that I am to marry this man. In fact, he's trying to force me to.

Nan—O, you don't really mean that!

Mary—You don't know him. He's capable of anything. Yes, he thinks I ought to marry his friend because he has money, in spite of the fact that he has been married before and is forty at the very least—and fat, too although he's hardly fair. Well, between the two of them they've talked to my mother so much that they've made her agree with them, for you see, this man's family is one of the proudest in Virginia, and they think I ought to feel honored by his willingness to make me his wife. Honored, indeed! I'd like to—choke—him—and my step-father along with him.

Nan—Well, I don't know as I blame you. I think I'd like to help you do it.

Mary—Things got so bad at home that I just couldn't stand it. Seemed like I'd go crazy to see my mother ordered round by that man, and I was most worn out trying to hold out against both of them—for, of course, I'd never give in and promise to give up Bob.

Nan—I should think not.

Mary—So at last I got mother to consent to my coming here to college for this year anyway and letting the matter rest till I got home again. But I was so worried and unhappy about Bob, that I just couldn't mix with the other girls like I wanted to and I just kept thinking all the time how I could find a way

to spoil my step-father's plans. One night, when I was most awfully blue, it just popped into my head that if I could do something to disgrace myself, something that would be a blot on a family's honor, or that would get me expelled from the college, why—well, the Cabot family's so proud, they'd never stand for anything like that, and so, well—then you see, he wouldn't want to marry me.

Nan—Ah, ha! I begin to see the daylight. But the plot thickens. Please go on—I feel as though a real thrill was coming.

Mary—Well, the other afternoon I just happened to be outside the door when Miss—when Francina was telling about composing the piece and I don't know just how it happened, but it came to me in a flash, that here was just the opportunity that I had been looking for. But Miss Barrett—I hated to do it—honestly I did—I hope you'll believe me—I—I— never stole a thing in my life, and I don't know what Bob'll ever say to me when he finds out. (*Cries.*)

Nan—(*Blows nose violently*) Why you poor child, of course, I believe you. (*Wipes eyes.*) Why, you've even got me going on the water works. You know, I told the girls that I thought there was some reason why you were so distant. Well, well, to, think that here's a girl crying because a man WANTS to marry her, and most of the rest of us are crying because they DON'T. There, there, honey (*pats Mary*), you cheer up, and I'm going right upstairs and tell the whole story to Francina and her mother. "Blessed are the Peace-makers," you know, and I'm the greatest little peace-maker you ever knew. We won't tell another soul about it until you have been "duly expelled." My word, just imagine HELPING anyone to GET expelled. Everything seems to be turned around just the other way to what it usually is. Well, don't you worry, honey, I'll fix things up all right. (*Exit Nan Back.*)

(*Mary picks up magazine, goes to large chair at left, turns it round and seats herself, back to audience, completely hidden from view. Enter Jean and Grace, Back R., carrying out-door clothes, coats, tams, ice skates, hockey sticks, etc. Place clothes on chairs, skates and sticks on floor.*)

Jean—Let's rest in here a few minutes before we go out.

(*Glances round.*) Hasn't this been a terrible day. I'll never forget it as long as I live.

Grace—O, now please, Jean, don't start that miserable Mary Sherman business again—I'm just sick and tired of hearing about it.

Jean—Well, you may be, but it's awful, just the same. But somehow, Grace, I do pity that girl.

Grace—Well, I must say that you and Nan do surprise me. I certainly do think that you are both taking this affair in the strangest way. Why you seem to forget that Fran's our friend and that we have known her for years, and this girl's just a new-comer, from goodness knows where, and here you are—

Jean—Yes, I know it must seem queer, but listen. I met Nan a little while ago, going up to Fran's room, and she looked so solemn and—and—sort of thoughtful that I'll just bet she knows more about this affair than she's telling.

Grace—(*Hotly*) Well, I don't care what she knows. I know all I want to know about Mary Sherman. The girl's a thief, a plain, common, ordinary thief, and that's all there is about it.

Jean—(*Shocked*) O Grace, don't say that.

(*Mary Sherman spring up, knocking over chair, flings magazine on floor in rage and confronts two girls who stand amazed.*)

Mary—How dare you say such things about me—how dare you. It's a lie, do you hear—a wicked lie—I'm not a thief—I'm not—I never stole a thing in my life, never, never, do you hear—and you don't know what you are talking about (*to Grace*) you—you little—you harradan. (*Bursts into tears and rushes from room back R.*)

Grace—(*Drawing long breath*) Whew! What a little spit-fire. Who'd have ever thought that she was sitting over there all the time. Well, listeners never hear any good of themselves, tis said, and it certainly proved true in this case.

Jean—(*Uncomfortably*) Yes, I know, but just the same, Grace, I wish—I do wish you hadn't come out quite so plain and called her—well—a thief. You know, that's an awful thing to say about a person.

Grace—(*Angrily*) Awful! Well, it's the truth, isn't it? What is she, I'd like to know? I believe in calling a spade a

spade. You girls make me tired. (*Puts on hat, coat—takes up skates and stick.*) I'm going out and get some fresh air into my brain and forget all about this whole miserable business. (*Makes drive with stick.*) I guess it'll do me good to let some of my temper out on a hockey ball. You coming?

Jean—Er—no. I don't think so, not just now, anyway. I don't feel much like it after all this. I guess I'll stay here and read a while.

Grace—(*Moving to exit at B.*) Well, I'm going. If you change your mind and decide to come out, you'll find me up at the east end of the lake. So long. (*Exit Grace.*)

(*Jean sighs audibly. Seats self at table, tries to read. Restless. Flings down book. Walks to L., picks up magazine from floor where Mary has thrown it. Seats self again, tries to read. Finally throws aside magazine, rises, puts on hat and coat, takes up skates and stick. Slowly exits. Back R.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II

(The garden of the Hart home, the following summer. Summer furniture scattered about. Table at L. front. Door at R. front presumably leading to house. Garden bench at R. of door. Golf sticks resting against bench. Tennis racquets against chairs. Canoe paddles and cushions where convenient. Another door back wall R., if possible all of glass, looking out to road. Two steps in front of door leading to house.)

(Nan and Grace on opposite sides of garden, playing ball.)

Grace—Doesn't it seem just great to have all the girls together again.

Nan—It sure does. You know that was one of the reasons that I hated to have college close—the girls somehow seem to drift away so soon and some of your best friends you never even see again. But it's certainly awfully nice of you, Grace, to have us all here for this week. *(They continue to play ball, talking as they play.)*

Grace—O, indeed it was nothing of the sort. I was just dying to see you all again, and besides I felt as though I owed you all something after the perfectly awful way I carried on over that affair of Mary Sherman. *(Enter Jean and Francina—R. front.)*

Jean—Hi there, give me a catch. *(Nan throws ball to her.)*

Francina—Whom do I hear taking Mary Sherman's name in vain? Say, by the way, where is she, Grace?

Grace—O, she's coming later. Say, wasn't it perfectly great that I could persuade her to come at all. You know, my Dad's quite pleased to think that she's going to be here. The last time she visited us he took quite a fancy to her—and as for my brother Dick—well—it's a shame that Bob Manners got in ahead of him. *(Nan looks at Jean.)* The only trouble is that we can't get her to come here often enough, not more than once in a blue moon.

Jean—Well, you mustn't forget that she is working for her living these days; not like us spoiled darlings, just going around having one perfectly grand time all day long. I think it was just splendid the way she refused to go home after she was

expelled and be dependent upon her mother. But—er—do you know, Grace, I never noticed that Dick was especially attentive to—er—Mary.

Nan—(Aside to Grace) I knew that would get her started. *(To Jean)* I never noticed either, that he was particularly *(imitating her)* attentive er—to—er—Mary. Did you, Fran?

Francina—(Somewhat mystified) I—er, why no, I don't just get what you're driving at.

*Grace—*Well, never mind dear, you'll wake up when the joke's all over. You know geniuses are always such unpractical persons. But to get back to the interesting subject under discussion *(nudging Nan.)* Of course, Dick's MY brother, so I really ought to know whom he likes, oughtn't I?

*Jean—*Well, Im' perfectly willing he should LIKE Mary Sherman.

*Chorus—*O, YOU ARE!

Francina—(Waking up) Well, the idea. And you kept this from me all this time. You wretch. *(Gives Jean a hug.)*

Jean—(Haughtily) Well, I'm sure I don't know what you girls are talking about. I know I haven't SAID a word.

*Nan—*No, darling, of course you haven't. You didn't say a word to me either at school last winter. I just GUESSED it. You know I'm a Yankee for that.

*Jean—*Well, I *(smiling)* do think he's kind of nice, and I guess—

Grace—(Interrupting) Well, he must be—he's MY brother *(Goes over to Jean.)* There, there, honey, don't you let this bunch "get your goat." Heavens! There goes that old slang again, and I promised dad to forfeit a quarter of my allowance every time I broke out again. Gosh, I'll need a poor-box collection if I keep on. But anyway don't you mind this crowd, Jean. I think Dickie's pretty nice, myself, even if he is my own brother, and *(shaking a finger at Jean)* O, what he says about you. *(Jean looks confused.)*

*Nan—*Well, to get back to 'Lady Mary.' Just fancy a girl like that going to work. *(Bounces a tennis ball on racquet.)* Why, do you know, my brother knows her folks quite well, and he says her father left heaps of money and that half of it is Mary's if she wants to make a fight for it—but she won't do a

thing about it on account of her mother. Southern pride—that's what I call it.

Grace—Well, my dad says that if Mary doesn't hurry up and claim the money pretty soon, there won't be any there, for that step-father of hers is a regular scamp, and he's going through the funds just as fast as he can get hold of them.

Francina—Why don't you get your father to talk to Mary about it, Grace?

Grace—He has tried to—but she won't listen on account of her mother—and you know when Mary makes up her mind to a thing she usually sticks to it.

Jean—Yes, I guess she proved that to all of us.

Grace—You see, she says that she wouldn't make her mother uphappy for the world, because she knows that it is only a matter of time when she will find that man out for herself—and then she'll be unhappy enough. And I can't tell you how perfectly awful Mary feels to think that her mother hasn't written her a line since that affair at college.

Nan—Well, that's all her step-father's doings. My brother says that Mary's mother is just as fond of her as she can be, but she's dead scared of that man. She doesn't care for him half as much as Mary thinks she does; and Frank says he'll bet dollars to doughnuts that one of the fine days, Mr. Step-father'll light out, and leave his wife altogether.

Francina—Well, I hope he does, and very soon at that, for I know for certain that Mary Sherman will never be happy until she had made up with her mother. What time do you expect her Grace?

Grace—Why she ought to be here on the next train. (*Looks at wrist watch.*)

Nan—Have I told you that my brother Frank met Bob Manners last week?

All—No.

Francina—O, do tell us about him—I'm really awfully anxious to meet him. I've heard so much about him and I think those Southern fellows are awfully fascinating.

Nan—Well, I'm anxious to meet him myself, but I know he must be pretty nice, for Frank just raves about him, and fellows don't usually do that unless there's something to rave about. Bob's doing very well, and he feels very badly to think

that Mary insists on working, and saying she'll never marry him unless her mother consents.

Grace—Well, I'll tell you something you'll all be interested in. I meant to keep it a secret, but perhaps it is just as well to let you all in on it, because then we can plan just what to do. (*All stand round in expectant attitudes.*) Well, my dad promised me that he would do his best to get Mary's mother to come up HERE some day during this week, and see if we can't fix things up so that she and Bob can get married.

Francina—My, my, but that will be fine. I do hope that he will succeed.

Grace—And now what do you say to a game of tennis. I think we've got time before Mary's train is due. Fran, you and I will play against Jean and Nan in a set of doubles. What do you say?

Francina—Suits me. (*They all take racquets.*)

Grace—Wait just a minute till I leave word in case Mary should come while we are gone. (*Goes to door—R. front—raps Smartly.*) Cora, we are going down to the tennis court for a little while, but I expect another guest—Miss Sherman—you remember? The young lady who was here in the Spring?

Cora—O, yes indeed, I remember her well, Miss Grace. A very sweet and pleasant-spoken young lady she was.

Grace—Well, if she comes before we get back, will you take good care of her, Cora? Give her some iced tea and cookies out here in the garden, and tell her to read and rest until we come.

Cora—Very well, I will, Miss Grace. (*Exit Cora—R. front.*)

Grace—Well, now I think we're ready. Come along girls. (*Exit all—laughing and chatting.*)

(*Auto horn sounds out in road. Cora comes running out. Door leading to road opens. Enter Mary Sherman carrying suit-case. Cora takes bag from her. Mary stands in door-way waves her hand to person outside and calls.*)

Mary—(*Out loud*) Good-bye, good-bye. Thank you ever so much for driving me up, Good-bye. Horn sounds again growing fainter. (*Mary comes to C.*) Ah, how do you do, Cora. I see you have not forgotten me.

Cora—O no, indeed, Miss. Miss Grace and I have often spoken of you.

Mary—(*Looking round*) And where is everybody. Surely they expected me?

Cora—O, yes, indeed, Miss Sherman. Miss Grace and the others were here only a moment ago, and they went down to the tennis court to play for a while. I think Miss Grace didn't expect you quite so soon.

Mary—No, I suppose she didn't. But you see my employer was coming out this way, and he offered to bring me out in his machine, so I didn't have to wait for the train.

Cora—Well, Miss Grace said as how I was to make you comfortable out here in the garden until she came back. Will you be taking off your things, Miss Sherman, and I'll get you a cold drink.

(*Takes Mary's wraps and bags and goes into house. Mary strolls about and finally seats self at table. Re-enter Cora bringing tray containing tea-things. Goes back to house and returns with magazine.*)

Cora—Miss Grace said you were to rest and read here in the garden, Miss Sherman. (*Hands Mary the magazine—arranges table.*)

Mary—All right, Cora. You are certainly taking very good care of me. But first I think I'll do full justice to your very dainty lunch. My! but that iced tea looks good. (*Moves chair—seats self fairly facing audience. Proceeds to eat and glances over magazine at same time.*)

(*Auto horn sounds again. Rapping at door back R. Cora goes to door and opens. Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler stands in door-way, clad in duster, auto hat, etc.*)

Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—Is this the Hart place?

(*At the sound of the voice, Mary starts, listens in strained attitude but does not turn.*)

Cora—Yes ma'am, it is. Will you come in?

Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—Thank you, My but we've had a hard time finding the place.

(*Mary jumps up. Turns round and faces her mother.*)

MARY SHERMAN!

Mary—Mother! (*Stands hesitating as though uncertain*

what to do. Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler opens arms. They rush to each other and embrace. Exit Cora softly R. front.) Why, mother dear, how do you come to be here?

Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—(Wiping eyes) Well, my dear, Mr. Hart sent me word that you were going to be here and that if I wanted to see you this would be a good chance. You see, he knew how lonely it has been for me, now that I am all alone.

*Mary—*ALONE! Why mother where is—where is—

*Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—*THAT MAN! Don't ever mention his name to me again. He's GONE! and I never want to even think of him. You were right, Mary, child you could see through him better than I could. O, how I have suffered (*weeps*).

*Mary—*Well, never mind, mumsie dear (*caresses her*), it's all over now, and we're well rid of him. Perhaps things can be just as they used to be before he came.

*Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—*Do you mean that, Mary? Can you ever forgive me for being such a silly old women?

*Mary—*Silly! Nonsense. I won't have you calling yourself bad names! We all makes mistakes sometimes, and you are just the best mumsie that ever was, and I love you as much as ever. (*Embraces her.*)

*Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—*Well, you don't know how thankful I am darling, to hear you talk that way. I was afraid that you would never want to see your foolish old mother again. We've been awful lonesome for you Mary, the old place and I—won't you come back to us—honey?

Mary—(Hesitates) W-e-h—it all depends—on—Bob.

*Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—*BOB! Bless his heart. Why the old place is plenty big enough for all of us, and I'm just dying to set my eyes on him. You'll just have to bring him along with you, honey.

Mary—(Rushing over and hugging her) You darling mumsie. That's just what I was hoping you'd say.

(Enter Grace, Jean, Nan and Francina, just in time to see Mary and stranger embracing. Swinging raequets and laughing.)

*Grace—*Hello, what's this?

Mary—(Turning to meet them) Hello there, everybody. I got here just a minute after you left. (*They all kiss. Mary takes*

her mother's hand and leads her to C.) And now girls, I want you all to meet my mother, Mrs. Sherman-Wheel—

Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—No, just Mrs. Sherman, plain Sherman from now on. I hope that you girls will all forget that it has ever been anything else—and we want you all to come down and see us at the old Sherman place in Virginia, don't we Mary?

Mary—Deed we do. Because you see girls, that's my old home, and it's going to be my new home too; mother's and—mine—and—Bob's. (*Holds out her left hand.*)

Francina—Bob's. (*Catches up Mary's hand and looks.*) Ah, so you are going to be married at last. O, I am so glad for you, my cherie! (*Mary nods smiling at her mother.*)

Mrs. Sherman-Wheeler—Yes, and the sooner they do it the better pleased I'll be. And girls, I invite you all to the wedding—a real old-fashioned Virginia wedding.

Nan—Well, we all accept on the spot, don't we, girls. (*All nod.*)

Francina—(*Hugging Mary*) O, you darling, I'm just as excited and pleased as I can be, and just as happy over your news as though it was myself. Who would ever have thought last year in college that it would all end like this.

Mary—(*Squeezing her mother's arm*) Well, at least it's been a very happy ending for me.

Grace—It is for us, too, and really it is the first time in my life I've ever know so much good to come from a "Little Bit of Scandal."

CURTAIN.

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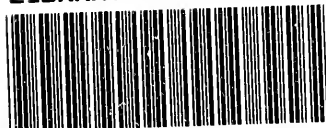
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